

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 28, 2005]
A WARMING CLIMATE

For the past four years members of the Bush administration have cast doubt on the scientific community's consensus on climate change. But even if they don't like the science, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, one of their closest allies in Iraq and elsewhere, has given the administration another, more realpolitik, reason to rejoin the climate change debate: "If America wants the rest of the world to be part of the agenda it has set, it must be part of their agenda, too," the prime minister said this week.

Mr. Blair's speech came at an interesting moment, both for the administration's energy and climate change policies and for the administration's diplomatic agenda. In the next few weeks, the House will almost certainly vote once again on last year's energy bill, a mishmash of subsidies and tax breaks that finally proved too expensive even for a Republican Senate to stomach. After a House vote, there may be an attempt to trim the cost of the bill and add measures to make it acceptable to more senators—including the growing number of Republicans who have, sometimes behind the scenes, indicated an interest in climate change legislation.

Indeed, any new discussion of energy policy could allow Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) to seek another vote on their climate change bill, which would establish a domestic "cap and trade" system or controlling the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.

If domestic politics could prompt the president to look again at the subject, international politics certainly should. Administration officials assert that mending fences with Europe is a primary goal for this year; if so, the relaunching of a climate change policy—almost any climate change policy—would be widely interpreted as a sign of goodwill, as Mr. Blair made clear. Beyond the problematic Kyoto Protocol, there are ways for the United States to join the global discussion, not least by setting limits for domestic carbon emissions.

Although environmentalists and the business lobby sometimes make it sound as if no climate change compromise is feasible, several informal coalitions in Washington suggest the opposite. The Pew Center on Global Climate Change got a number of large energy companies and consumers—including Shell, Alcoa, DuPont and American Electric Power—to help design the McCain-Lieberman legislation. A number of security hawks have recently joined forces with environmentalists to promote fuel efficiency as a means of reducing U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Most substantively, the National Commission on Energy Policy, a group that deliberately brought industry, environmental and government experts together to hash out a compromise, recently published its conclusions after two years of debate.

Among other things, it proposed more flexible means of promoting automobile fuel efficiency and suggested determining in advance exactly how high the "price" for carbon emissions should be allowed to go, thereby giving industry some way to predict the ultimate cost of a cap-and-trade system.

They also point out that legislation limiting carbon emissions would immediately create incentives for industry to invent new fuel-efficient technologies, to build new nuclear power plants (nuclear power produces no carbon) and to find cleaner ways to burn coal. Technologies to reduce carbon emissions as well as fossil fuel consumption around the world are within reach, in other

words—if only the United States government wants them.

JUNE 12, 2003.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
*Russell Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

Hon. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN,
*Hart Senate Office Building,
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DEAR SENATORS MCCAIN AND LIEBERMAN: As Congress takes up the issue of market-based systems to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, we are writing to encourage you to incorporate an allowance price cap sometimes referred to as a "safety valve." In the context of a cap-and-trade system for emission allowances, a safety valve would specify a maximum market price at which the government would step in and sell additional allowances to prevent the price from rising any further. Much like the Federal Reserve intervenes in bond and currency markets to protect the economy from adverse macroeconomic shocks, this intervention is designed to protect the economy automatically from adverse energy demand and technology shocks. While we disagree on what steps are necessary in the short run, we both agree it is particularly important to pursue them in a manner that limits economic risk.

Our support for the safety valve stems from the underlying science and economics surrounding the problem of global climate change, and is something that virtually all economists—even two with as politically diverse views as ourselves—can agree upon. It is based on three important facts.

First, unexpected events can easily make the cost of a cap-and-trade program that includes carbon dioxide quite high, even with a modest cap. For example, consider an effort to reduce domestic carbon dioxide emissions by 5% below future forecast levels over the next ten years—to about 1.8 billion tons of carbon. This is in the ballpark of the domestic reductions in the first phase of McCain-Lieberman allowing for offsets, the targets in the Bush climate plan, and the level of domestic emission reductions described by the Clinton administration under its vision of Kyoto implementation. Based on central estimates, the required reductions would amount to about 90 million tons of carbon emissions, and might cost the economy as a whole around \$1.5 billion per year. However, reaching the target could instead require 180 million tons of reductions because of otherwise higher emissions related to a warm summer, a cold winter, or unexpected economic growth. Based on alternative model estimates, it could also cost twice as much to reduce each ton of carbon. The result could be costs that are eight times higher than the best guess.

Second and equally important, the benefits from reduced greenhouse gas emissions have little to do with mission levels in a particular year. Benefits stem from eventual changes in atmospheric concentrations of these gases that accumulate over very long periods of time. Strict adherence to a short-term emission cap is therefore less important from an environmental perspective than the long-term effort to reduce emissions more substantially. Without a safety valve, cap-and-trade risks diverting resources away from those long-term efforts in order to meet a less important short-term target.

Finally, few approaches can protect the economy from the unexpected outcome of higher energy demand and inadequate technology as effectively as a safety valve. For example, opportunities to seek offsets outside a trading program can effectively reduce the expected cost to a particular emission goal—which is beneficial—but that does not

address concerns about unexpected events. In fact, if the system becomes dependent on these offsets, their inclusion can increase uncertainty about program costs if the availability and cost of the offsets themselves is not certain. Another proposal, a "circuit breaker," would halt future declines in the cap when the allowance price exceeds a specified threshold, but would do little to relax the current cap if shortages arise. Features that do provide additional allowances when shortages arise, such as the possibility of banking and borrowing extra allowances, are helpful, but only to the extent they can ameliorate sizeable, immediate, and persistent adverse events.

To summarize, the climate change problem is a marathon, not a sprint, and there is little environmental justification for heroic efforts to meet a short-term target. Such heroic efforts might not only waste resources, they risk souring our appetite to confront the more serious long-term problem. Absent a safety valve, a cap-and-trade program risks exactly that outcome in the face of surprisingly high demand for energy or the failure of inexpensive mitigation opportunities to arise as planned. A safety valve is the simplest, most transparent way to signal the market about the appropriate effort to meet short-term mitigation goals in the face of adverse events.

While trained economists hold divergent views on many topics—as our own views demonstrate—economic theory occasionally delivers a relatively crisp message that virtually everyone can agree on. We believe this is one of those occasions, and hope you will consider these points as Congress addresses various climate change policies in the coming months.

Sincerely,

R. GLENN HUBBARD,
*Professor, Columbia
University, Chair-
man, Council of Eco-
nomic Advisers,
2001–2003.*

JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ,
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THE UNITED NATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MACK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss a topic of worldwide importance, and that is the United Nations.

The United Nations was created in 1945 after World War II, and it was done to preserve world peace through collective security; and I believe, quite frankly, that it has failed miserably in its role.

As we approach the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, I wanted to discuss the United Nations this afternoon, to look at its original charter and its mission, and evaluate if the United Nations has accomplished what it was designed to do.

If we look over here, we have set out what its initial mission was: "The United Nations Failing its Mission." Its charter calls as follows: The U.N.

charter calls for maintaining international peace and security and to that end to take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace."

It sets forth in more detail, if we would read the charter, to maintain international peace and security, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats, to bring about the peace and world order.

Secondly, to develop friendly relations among nations based upon respect, respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

Thirdly, to achieve cooperation in solving international problems, problems of economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian in character.

And fourthly and finally, to promote and encourage respect for human rights and for the other fundamental freedoms that we all hold dear. Freedom from distinctions such as race, sex, language, and religion.

Unfortunately, if we look at the record of the United Nations over the last 60-some-odd years on any one of these issues, I think people would have to be in agreement with me that it has failed on each and every one. The United Nations has not maintained international peace and security. As we point out here, the number of wars that have occurred since 1945 number well over 300 wars. Those wars have translated into the deaths of some 22 million people.

The only times that the United Nations has ever supported intervening to try to actually stop hostilities, to try to prevent wars, to try to do and live up to what its mission says were on two occasions. One was with respect to the Korean War. And the only reason that that came about, if the Members recall their history, was that the Soviet Union at the U.N. in New York boycotted the Security Council meeting, and they were able to take a vote to intervene at that point.

And the second one was much more recent, and that, of course, was in the first Persian Gulf war. But other than those two examples, there has never been any example where the U.N. has successfully stepped in and prevented these wars; and because of it, 22 million lives have been lost.

Just over the last 10 years, there have been multiple genocides that occurred under the United Nations' watch. These have occurred in Bosnia; Rwanda; and now, as we speak, in the Darfur region of the Sudan. Each time the United Nations has failed to take the appropriate action and the action that was needed to put an end to those mass killings, and it was mainly due to political and economic pressures.

If we think about it, the biggest threat right now to the civilized world today, as we speak, is terrorism. And even in this field, the U.N. has failed throughout its existence to develop a clear definition of what terrorism really is.

Another main mission of the United Nations is to promote and encourage human rights and equal rights throughout the world. In this regard we have something called the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. This is the primary body that the U.N. has that is charged with accomplishing this objective. However, again, look at the record and see that the U.N. has failed in this area as well. Countries such as Cuba, the Sudan, China, countries that have a long history of violating human rights, countries such as these sit on the very commission in the U.N. that is supposed to be protecting the human rights and dignity of the people in these countries.

These countries' membership and others like them on this panel destroys the very credibility of this commission; and it prevents the United Nations from achieving its goals, those goals in promoting and strengthening human rights. In fact, it was just a short time ago, several years ago, that Libya, that country with that terrible human rights track record, was selected to serve as the very chairman of the Human Rights Commission.

When we get into the issue of dollars and cents, American taxpayers should be questioning just where their hard-earned tax dollars go. The United States pays almost 25 percent of the entire United Nations budget. The United States pays upwards of 25 percent of the entire budget for the U.N., estimated in the 25 percent ratio. But then when we compare that to the number of votes in the U.N. that side with the United States on important issues relative to the citizens of the state, the pie chart looks particularly different.

On the left, the pie chart showing almost a quarter of the budget coming from the U.S., U.S. taxpayers; on the right the pie chart showing the number of votes that are with us as opposed to being against us, and we just get a slight sliver. What is that number? The share of votes in the U.N. General Assembly siding with the United States is 1/2 percent. Less than 1 percent of the time does the U.N. side with the United States. The majority of the time, almost 99.5 percent of the time, they are against us. And despite the fact that we pay a vast majority, a huge percentage, of the U.N.'s budget, we have the same voting rights as anyone else there; we have the same voting power as countries such as Tunisia, Bulgaria, El Salvador; the same voting rights as some of the other countries that I mentioned previously, those countries with terrible human rights violation records that serve on the Commission of Human Rights, et cetera. Countries that are headed by dictators and tyrants have the same ability to influence that world body that we do in the U.N.

All these problems that I have mentioned lead back now to the very point that I am trying to make this afternoon, that the United Nations is in se-

rious need of major change and reform. Over the next hour my colleagues and I will discuss some of these problems, problems that the United Nations has had from its very foundation, from its very creation in 1945, and have existed right up to the present time. Some of these problems should be familiar to the Members as we see they make the headlines of some of the papers. Other papers we have to read in the back to actually find out what is going on with the U.N., problems including such things as the now infamous Oil-for-Food scandal, the sexual exploitation of women and little children in the Congo, also the ongoing crisis that I referenced earlier in the Darfur region of the Sudan.

We need to examine now the ways we need to take to reform the United Nations and make it a more accountable and transparent world body, if that is possible.

I should say that I commend the House Committee on International Relations, and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) as well, the chairman of that committee, because he and the committee, as we speak and just recently, have been working to bring up legislation out of the committee now and before this House that will address these problems, bringing up and passing a substantial United Nations reform proposal. I look forward to that legislation coming to the floor of the House for our consideration, for our review, and hopefully for a vote on that legislation soon.

The lack of oversight and accountability by an international body that claims to represent the moral conscience of the world really should not be tolerated, should not be tolerated by the citizens of this country, should not be tolerated by the citizens of the world. As the largest financial contributor to the United Nations in the world, the United States is the one country in the best position now to demand those reforms.

So tonight let us take a look at some of those particular areas that I have referenced already in need of reform with regard to the legislation that we will be seeing soon out of committee and before this House for consideration.

Probably the one that is most familiar to the general public today is that dealing with the Oil-for-Food scandal; and when we think about it, it really is not that familiar to a lot of people because for a long time it was not getting mainstream press attention. In fact, if it was not for a newspaper in New York and a few other papers that focused on this extensively, we would never have seen this issue make the front pages of the paper elsewhere. And if it was not for certain news commentaries on stations like Fox and otherwise that did actually do a good job of bringing this issue to the fore, the rest of the mainstream media failed to dig into this issue to find out what the problems were with regard regards to the Oil-for-Food scandal.

So let us take this opportunity here this afternoon, then, to revisit that topic to allow the public to dig in and take a look at what the history was there and hopefully open the eyes of some people to some of the real problems within the U.N.

With regard to the Oil-for-Food scandal, we have to go back to the first gulf war. Back at that time, sanctions were put in place on Saddam Hussein and his entire regime, and those sanctions were put in place that forbade them from exporting their oil outside of their country. And we know that, of course, the oil revenue was his main revenue stream coming into that country. So restrictions were placed on that country saying that they could not export any more oil. And, of course, that was having a tremendous economic downward impact upon his country and, of course, the people that lived in it as well.

The U.N. became involved and said that there were problems for the regular common people in that country because of these sanctions. So in 1996 these restrictions were softened, and the U.N. established the Oil-for-Food program. And in that program, it allowed the Iraqi government, Saddam Hussein, to sell a limited amount of oil and a limited amount from his reserves, was able to sell outside of that country.

□ 1445

The revenue that would be coming back into Iraq was to be used for humanitarian purposes and supplies, food, housing and the like, medical supplies, for the regular people who were suffering in Iraq.

When the U.N. established this, however, Saddam Hussein demanded certain transaction payments from the companies and officials that were doing business with him. In other words, what happened here, these were basically kickbacks to Saddam Hussein, money that would turn around and then he would be able to use for other purposes, other than helping the people of his country.

The way it worked was simply this: Under the agreement set up with the U.N., he was able to designate those companies that would be the ones that would provide the humanitarian services. Well, if those companies wanted to have anything to do with getting that lucrative contract with his government, he would in turn compel them to make some sort of, I guess you would say, under-the-table kickback to himself personally and his government.

And what did he use that money for? He turned around and used that money for his army, for his generals, for munitions, and, of course, also to provide for the palaces that we have since seen that he enjoyed in that country, meanwhile while his people were destitute and in poverty. Also money that was used to provide funding to Palestinians and the homicide bomber families. Suicide bombing families who engaged in

that conduct were soon informed that their families would be receiving a stipend, if you will, of \$15,000 to \$25,000 or more, care of the Saddam Hussein government, care of the Oil-for-Food revenue stream.

Now, by allowing this corrupt system to continue and allowing Saddam Hussein to manipulate the Oil-for-Food Program and also to bribe government officials from other countries, and the reports have shown there has been an extensive list of government officials and people in high levels and positions in other countries, countries that perhaps it really should not surprise us, whether we are talking about people in Russia or in France, countries that were fighting the United States and our positions where we had taken a tougher stance on Saddam Hussein. I guess now, in retrospect, we know why some of those countries were fighting the United States and our position to try to help the people of Iraq, because there were people over in those countries that were receiving part of those kickbacks from Saddam Hussein.

In the end, how much money was diverted from the legitimate purposes of helping these people? How much money was diverted from providing for food and shelter and medical supplies? Well, altogether, the reports are now looking at \$21 billion was stolen by Saddam Hussein at the expense of his own people of his country.

Think about it. The U.N.'s Oil-for-Food Program was created to help provide humanitarian supplies, food and medicine, to the less fortunate. But Saddam Hussein, under the auspices and the willing hand, if you will, of the U.N., was allowed to use that money to advance weapons and military programs as the poor were continuing to be plagued by starvation and disease.

Now the most troublesome facts about the ongoing Oil-for-Food investigation now is the lack of cooperation being provided from the U.N. to get to the very bottom of how all this occurred and what actually took place. We will be taking a look at that in a little more detail to see how those reports came out and the fact that the U.N. continues to this day to fail to cooperate with Congress, with the information that we have sought to receive and also with regard to the information that we had received and actually now that the U.N. would like to get that information back.

I see I have been joined by one of my colleagues, the gentleman from the great State of Florida, who also I would presume would like to speak to the issue of the U.N. and the need for reform and some of the problems with the U.N.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY).

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for his distinguished leadership in this and other matters.

Mr. Speaker, it is very sad that as I go back and talk to people in my dis-

trict about the role of the U.N., Americans know they are very disturbed by the U.N., but they like the idea of having this United Nations as a place where we can promote world peace and world security and do some other things. It is not until you explain the record of the United Nations, and before then the League of Nations, of total failure when it comes to promoting freedom, total failure when it comes to protecting collective security, total failure across the board that they really get frustrated.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from New Jersey. The U.N. is in need of deep and drastic and dramatic reform, and it is very sad to see liberals in the United States Senate hold up a reformer like John Bolton's nomination merely because he believes that America's security and freedom should come first, and the United Nations needs a serious dose of reality.

I will tell you it has been sad historically to watch the fact that the United Nations, that was primarily the child after World War II of the British Government and the United States Government to promote security for the world and peace, has been a failure.

It was NATO that protected the freedom and the peace during the Cold War. The League of Nations, which was started in 1914-1915, failed to deter any major aggressor, including ultimately Hitler's Germany that attacked Western Europe and threatened peace throughout the world.

Just like the League of Nations failed to protect the security of free countries, so the U.N. has never once had any impact on protecting freedom-loving, peaceful countries from aggressive totalitarian countries, the Cold War being the biggest example but not the only example. The U.N. was of absolutely no value whatsoever throughout the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and it was NATO that preserved through power the peace. As Lady Thatcher said, it was Ronald Reagan who won the Cold War without firing a single shot.

Even in smaller regional conflicts, the U.N. historically has been a total waste of time, money, effort and resources. For example, Cuba having forces in Angola was never deterred by the U.N.; the Soviet Union invading Afghanistan, the Vietnamese and the Korean conflicts, again examples of the complete impotence of the United Nations to the detriment of freedom-loving peoples.

As my colleague pointed out, the Saddam Hussein failure has been a dramatic one, but it is just the most recent one, along with the Oil-for-Food scandal, the perverted use of some U.N. troops in undermining the safety of women and children, actually engaging in the rape and torture of these people.

Even when it comes to peacekeeping, something you would think the United Nations would be good at, they have a miserable record. In Somalia, it was U.N. troops that presided over the largest genocide in the last 10 years. They

actually facilitated the genocide by herding together folks that were ultimately slaughtered. In Rwanda, you had the Tutsis slaughtered by their oppressors. The United Nations was totally useless. In Yugoslavia, you had the horrible situation that resulted from the U.N. embargo, denying one side the arms to protect themselves while the other side engaged in mass slaughter in Bosnia and elsewhere.

I want to end, Mr. Speaker, by thanking the gentleman from New Jersey and saying there are some things that the United Nations can help at: distributing food in times of crisis. They are a nice debating society, but they have never once provided any bit of security to the United States or any of our friends. To the extent that they condemn anybody, it is typically our friends like Israel, when they equated Zionism, the belief that the Jewish people ought to have a state where they can be free from threats from oppression and anti-semitism and absolute genocide. It is Israel that has been condemned more than any other nation on Earth by the United Nations.

Finally, the United Nations has never been united in any way, shape or form. Some people say it is a democracy, but it is a democracy where a majority of the people that vote are actually dictators, tyrants. The majority of the United Nations is governed by places like the African Union, the Arab League and the Islamic Conference, often not only hostile to America's interests but some of these nations actually promoting terrorism itself.

So I congratulate the gentleman from New Jersey. U.N. reform is a must. If we are not going to reform the U.N., it is time to pull out of the U.N., put together a group of freedom-loving, peaceful nations that will engage in real collective security, and not engage in this mirage where we pour our money down a rat trap, fund our enemies often, and embarrass ourselves by being a participant.

I yield back to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for those comments. The gentleman made a number of good points, the last one with regard to what they are good at. Before the gentleman got here, I put up the one chart as to what the charter of the U.N. says, what is their ultimate responsibility, why did we create the U.N. back after World War II. It was basically the larger mission.

There it is. The larger mission is maintaining international peace and security, which means to try to prevent future wars so we would not have another war of the world as we had in World War II, and to try to prevent future wars, where we have had over 300 wars.

Then the gentleman alluded to another point, which is interesting. The gentleman says if they are not doing what the charter tells them to do,

which is to try to make us all feel a little more secure at home, that we are not going to engage in another world war, maybe at least, the gentleman suggested, that they are helping out providing the delivery of food and the like, disaster relief.

But I think the gentleman will agree with me, because I know the gentleman follows the issue of the United States providing tsunami relief after the last devastation that occurred at the end of last year, how the White House was immediately taking action. Although it was not getting a lot of press and it was not actually looking for press at that time, the White House and this administration said we are going to just go in and get the job done, and we immediately sent our troops over there, our ships over in that region of the world.

We were not calling up the press on the same day we were doing it. The administration, they just said, we have a problem. Let us get the United States over there and try to solve the problem with regard to getting the food and supplies to the people.

I know the gentleman is very aware of that and was helpful in regard to moving the legislation to get funding there.

But as an individual who has gone on the ground in those countries that were suffering from the tsunami, one of the interesting aspects of it is not so much what the U.N. did, it is what the United States did and what some other bilateral agreements did. As the gentleman recalls, what happened was the United States stepped up and said we will provide troops and equipment immediately. We will also provide funding.

They intermediately entered into agreements with countries like India. India, of course, was right there. They had their ships within less than an hour on the scene. And we were actually getting the job done.

Later, the U.N. became involved. Even after the U.N. slowly began to make its presence known, it was not so much the U.N. that was doing the work, as the gentleman knows, it is the NGOs, all those other, what is the word for it, nonprofit entities, you might sort of say, that were on the ground, that were already in some of these countries, funded in large part by American taxpayer dollars. Those were the guys who were getting the job done.

So, just to conclude, I think the gentleman makes a good point that the U.N. does not do its original mission at all, which is to provide security to this country, but the other point is that all they really do is come in after the fact when it comes to providing food and medicine and still rely upon our tax dollar to get the job done.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I thank the gentleman.

The United Nations, to the extent it does anything, it distributes food and

resources largely provided by the United States of America. There are other non-governmental organizations that do at least as good a job on most occasions. If it was not for the generosity of American taxpayers and American contributions, much of the world would never recover from some of the horrible disasters that occur.

But I do believe there is a potential role for the United Nations to play in continuing to be a world welfare organization in times of emergency relief perhaps and maybe a cocktail debating society. But unless there are dramatic reforms, they are good for nothing more. And it is a threat to our security if we even pretend that they ever have deterred an aggressor.

As the gentleman points out with his chart, since 1945, their main mission was to deter aggression by hostile countries to freedom. They have failed 300 times to do their main mission. So let us never depend on the United Nations for our security or to protect American interests.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman. Before I go on, I will comment that the gentleman's comment about a debating society is one that I have used as well, but it is a debating society made of who? It is a debating society made up of tyrants, dictators and thugs, sort of like governments. I do not know that I really want to be engaged in a debating society like that. But I thank the gentleman for his work and support.

As was alluded to, one of the things the U.N. does not do is prevent wars. One of the things they might be able to do is help the people. That is what they were supposed to be doing with regard to the Oil-for-Food scandal situation, providing food to the people of Iraq through their oil revenue stream.

Unfortunately, as I was alluding to a moment ago, they failed miserably in that respect inasmuch as they allowed the dictator Saddam Hussein to use those dollars for other things, to use those dollars to help build up his military, to use those dollars to help build up their palaces for their generals, some of which I had the opportunity to see when I had gone over to Iraq to visit our troops over there, magnificent palaces that these generals and Saddam Hussein lived in at the time while the rest of the country was basically in squalor and poverty. That is where the Oil-for-Food revenue was going to.

It was also going to, as I said, people outside of his country, bribing basically government officials and other high-ranking individuals in other countries, such as Russia and France and elsewhere, the very same countries that were battling the United States in the U.N. saying that we should not be taking a tough position with Iraq, that we should allow them to continue on with the Oil-for-Food Program.

□ 1500

Well, now we know why. They wanted the Oil-For-Food program to continue

just so that they could continue to have a stream of money coming into their private bank rolls. Well, the U.N. finally found out that that was going on. Investigations were taking place, investigations are taking place here in this Congress. But, as I alluded to a moment ago, the very U.N. that we fund and house here in the United States in New York City, they failed to work with us here in Congress so that we can, as American citizens, get to the bottom of it and find out where our dollars are going to and exactly what sort of transparency we need in order to find out this information. The U.N. has shielded their very own people. The U.N. has said that we are not going to provide documents to Congress that the Congress wants, we are not going to provide people to come and testify before Congress that Congress needs.

So what did the U.N. do in this regard? Well, what the U.N. did do was set up their own commission, or the commission has been set up, as we are all familiar with now, to investigate, which is now known as the Volcker Commission, to investigate the allegations involving the Oil-For-Food.

The problem with that is a number of folds:

First of all, the gentleman who is heading up the Commission, Paul Volcker, an honorable gentleman, but someone it has been discovered has close ties himself to the U.N. in the past and to the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, in the past, as well as other conflicts of interest, so perhaps not the best to be heading up the investigation. Also, as far as the powers that that commission has, lack of subpoena powers, lack of ability to hold people in contempt in order to get them to testify before this commission.

And it is for those reasons that that commission has not done the study and has not done the inquiry that we would all like to have had, so we could get all the information out with regard to the Oil-For-Food scandal and the mismanagement at the top, at least the malfeasance, misfeasance at worst, at the top of the hierarchy of the U.N.

Paul Volcker also has been accused of downplaying Kofi Annan's involvement in the scandal. Several reports have come out of his commission with regard to this scandal, and others. They are called interim reports.

Several weeks ago, unfortunately for them, two of their top investigators who were working on his commission resigned from that investigatory body; they resigned. And the reason they did so, they said, was because they felt that the commission and the reports that have been issued by the commission basically are too soft, not hard-hitting enough, on Kofi Annan and Kofi Annan's involvement with the Oil-For-Food scandal. Those individuals and the information that they have been able to take out as far as documents and what have you would not have been available to Congress, had it not been that those people did not do the honor-

able thing and stand up and say that they are not going to be part of an investigation that is not much more than a whitewash of what is going on over at the U.N.

The second report, remember I said there were several interim reports, the second interim report's most troubling finding was the fact that Kofi Annan's chief of staff authorized the shredding of documents, numerous documents authorized by the chief of staff of Kofi Annan relating to the Oil-For-Food scandal. He retired on January 15, earlier this year. It was the same day that the committee was informed that these documents had been shredded. In other words, documents that would have been necessary to show the direct involvement of the parties to this action for Oil-For-Food were simply destroyed and shredded.

It is interesting to note that this is the same individual, the same chief of staff that previously had supposedly sent out an order saying that no documents should be discarded, that the commission should have access to all documents that they needed and sought; but at the end of the day, it was that individual himself, the chief of staff, that was found guilty. Well, not found guilty, but found as the individual who was shredding these documents.

Now that these other two individuals have resigned from the commission that have been referenced before because of their views on the report being too soft, they took with them certain documents and they took those documents, and those documents have found their way here to this House and to the investigatory bodies here in this House.

One would think that the U.N. and the Volcker Commission would say, that is fine. Now that you have the documents, go ahead and do all that you need. But what happened right after that? Well, we know from the reports in the press that Paul Volcker then came back and attempted as best he could to block congressional investigations from looking at these documents and, in fact, demanded those very same documents back. So, basically, just a pattern of blocking inquiry into what the U.N. has been doing and a pattern of standing in the way of citizens of the United States and the citizens of the world to see for themselves the poor job that the U.N. has done with regard to living up to its charter of protecting and making a secure world and protecting the people in Iraq.

I see that I am joined here this afternoon, and I appreciate that, by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE); and I yield to him.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in strong agreement with the sentiment expressed by the gentleman from New Jersey and our colleagues who have spoken in this Special Order, and I especially want to commend the

gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) for being one of the singular and most effective voices about the truth about the United Nations in the 21st century on Capitol Hill, and I appreciate his leadership in organizing this Special Order today.

As a member of the newly organized Subcommittee on Oversight for the United Nations, I am especially grateful to have an opportunity to speak and to do so specifically, as the gentleman has requested, about legislation that we on the Committee on International Relations reported, literally just hours ago, when, by a very close vote, and what was I think an extraordinary and civil and thoughtful debate, the Committee on International Relations produced U.N. reform with teeth.

The Henry Hyde U.N. Reform Act of 2005, we believe, will come to the floor of this Congress next week, and it will represent, in sum total, the most significant effort by the people of the United States of America to reform and amend this half-century-old institution. And that is the intention and the purpose of what, when it was introduced with the authorship of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and my singular cosponsorship, the Hyde/Pence bill purposes to do.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that if the United Nations did not exist as a forum for international deliberation, we would very likely have to invent it. The United Nations, not as a world government, but as a world deliberative forum, serves an important role. But because of years of mismanagement, mindless bureaucracy, and, as the gentleman has spoken with force and authority today, profound corruption, this institution's vitality and survival in the 21st century is at risk without fundamental reform. And that is precisely what the Henry Hyde U.N. Reform Act brings.

But I say very carefully and directly, this is not a bill that provides an outline for reform of the United Nations with, if I can speak plainly, the United States providing virtually a third of the funding for this institution and then saying, we think these are good ideas for reform; we sure hope you do too. This is U.N. reform with teeth.

In fact, we use a variety of methods of leverage in the United Nations Reform Act of 2005, but that which has caught the most notice is the potential withholding of 50 percent of U.S. assessed dues if certifications are not made in the critical areas of reform that are described. Those areas include budgeting. The Hyde legislation urges the shifting of 18 programs from regular assessed budget authority to voluntary funded programs that will be a great deal more accountable in the process.

On the subject of accountability, the Hyde legislation mandates the creation of an independent oversight board with broad investigative authority through the Office of Internal Oversight Services, what will come to be known as

the OIOS, will have the authority to initiate investigations into mismanagement and wrongdoing and establish procedures to protect U.N. employees or contractors who serve in a whistleblowing capacity.

In the area of human rights, the U.N. Reform Act also has a get-tough policy mandating that the United Nations adopt criteria for membership on any human rights policy within the institution. Under these criteria, countries that fail to uphold the universal declaration of human rights would be ineligible for membership. Now, this may come as a shock to any that are looking in today, Mr. Speaker, but that is not required today. There are countries who participate in human rights forums in the United Nations that do not uphold the universal declaration of human rights. We say that should not be the case.

And in the area of peacekeeping, where there have been such extraordinary scandals of late, children, little girls, 10, 11 and 12 years of age being sexually molested by blue-helmeted U.N. peacekeepers, which photographs record being made of the molestation and then the trafficking of those records, there are fundamental reforms in the Hyde legislation that would mandate a single and enforceable uniform code of conduct for all personnel serving in peacekeeping missions.

And there is a strict mandate that the criteria of the commission on peacekeeping reform that was adopted by the United Nations, that the five criteria and objectives be implemented in the immediate before any additional peacekeeping operations can be authorized by the President of the United States.

I want to yield back to the gentleman from New Jersey because there will be ample time on the floor next week, I believe, when the U.N. Reform Act comes to this floor, to unpack it for the American people. But it is, in a very real sense, an opportunity to take that information that the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is leading on to the floor today and who has been such a champion of, taking the truth about the U.N. and saying, here is the proper response of the American people.

As I close, let me say that one response could simply be the American people, through their elected representatives, could profoundly reduce our participation financially in the United Nations. And it is important to say that the U.N. Reform Act keeps funding level. There is no reduction in funding by the people of the United States of America to the United Nations in the U.N. Reform Act. There is a potential for as much as a 50 percent reduction in assessed dues if the United Nations, through its membership and internal organs, does not fundamentally adopt and implement reform in the next 2 to 3 years.

It is U.N. reform with teeth, and for all of the reasons that the gentleman

from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) effectively brings to the floor today, the Henry Hyde U.N. Reform Act of 2005 is an idea whose time has come.

I yield back with gratitude to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, as well, for joining us here this afternoon and also for the work that he has already done on the committee. I commend him for that. I know the gentleman is well respected by all of our colleagues for his insightfulness and level-headedness as far as addressing this issue because, as he pointed out, we could be going in either extreme on this issue.

Probably, when we get into the debate on this legislation next week, whether it becomes partisan or not, I can imagine that there will be extremes from both sides, so I appreciate the gentleman's moderation on this and his hard work on this. I am sure the gentleman joins with me in supporting the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE).

In essence, what the committee is doing is they are looking for in the Reform Act of 2005, these are my words, not the committee's words, but they are looking for oversight, accountability, and cutting bureaucracy. I guess the same thing that they were always looking for in any form of entity, government or otherwise, that plays an important role in our lives. We do not want a huge bureaucracy, we do want a level of accountability so we know who is responsible and we can hold them accountable for what they have done, and we want oversight. We want somebody, as the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) alluded to, somebody, some apparatus who would be in a position to be able to step back for a moment and take a look at the situation as a whole and see whether they are complying with their overall charter and complying with their overall mission.

□ 1515

As we have alluded to already this evening, we already know throughout history they have not been doing so, so now we have to decide what to do with it.

I referenced before the problems, the ongoing investigation with the U.N. and what they have found so far. The behavior of the U.N. up to date, in my opinion, is just totally indefensible with regard to their investigations and the investigations that they are taking, blocking for Congress to take. I, for one, take the position, and have signed on to legislation that we had last year when these issues first came up, to say that we should be suspending all, we should be suspending all funding to the U.N. until they agree to fully cooperate and provide us with that level of accountability.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) has legislation that addresses the issue and says that we should be withholding some level of funding to

the U.N. until there is a true accounting, until we can certify that we actually know where all of that money went to.

Remember how much we were talking about here? \$21 billion has been effectively stolen, stolen from the people of Iraq, the poor, destitute people of Iraq, during the entire scandal by Saddam Hussein and other people around the world and his regime, the largest theft, I guess, in world history. And we are just looking for an accountability for that.

It is really an outrage when you think about it. The American public should be outraged about what has occurred at the U.N. The world community should be outraged about what occurred at the U.N., and right over in Iraq in the work of Saddam Hussein and right under the noses of the administrators at the U.N.?

A \$21 billion scandal, and it is only now beginning to have the facts come out. We have a responsibility as Members of the Congress to continue with this investigation. We have a responsibility, as alluded to before by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE), to make sure that if we are going to be providing them any of your hard-earned tax dollars that we will get to the bottom of it, hold those people responsible for what their actions were, for participating in or profiting from this outrage. They need to lose their jobs or go to jail or both.

So that is just one tip of the iceberg problem with the U.N. And I can allude just to a point how this impacts upon the world issue, world community as far as security and terrorism is concerned. I think I have the chart here.

I referenced before what Saddam Hussein was able to do with the money, buy houses and palaces and military. But part of it, also, in not too complex an arrangement here, part of it also helped to facilitate suicide bombers which we see on TV more frequently than any of us want. But suicide bombers in other parts of the world as well?

I mentioned before that there was a situation where he was getting kickbacks from payments from companies in the Oil-for-Food program. Some of that money then went to a bank account in Jordan. There was also revenue coming into the regime, a \$3 a barrel fee for oil. That was paid by the Jordanian Government as part of their agreement over with Iraq to get some of money out. Again, that money ended up in a Jordanian bank account there. There is a bank, Rafidian Bank in Iraq. That money was there; and other sources as well, I should say. The top line here shows sources of money: kickbacks, fee per barrel and other sources of funds as well.

All of that money coming into the regime, and where did it go? Into the various bank accounts that regime controlled. And eventually out of that bank account and to the families of suicide bombers. \$15, \$20, \$25, upwards of \$35,000 each was going to the families of suicide bombers to help them

out and to encourage that heinous type of action that we see as life is being taken from other families and individuals.

The regime was supporting it. The U.N. was basically facilitating it by allowing it to occur under their noses.

I am seeing now that I am joined by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) for bringing forth this important special order and for his presentation with regard to the United Nations.

I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words about how we might better reform the United Nations and how we might better direct the future of this country and the world. There has been a lot said, Mr. Speaker, about the United Nations and what kind of a structure it is. This country has for a long time believed very firmly in the sense that we can bring together an international dialogue, resolve the world's problems and avoid war. That was why the League of Nations was established and certainly why the United Nations was established. The U.N. was established in an endeavor to correct some of the mistakes that were made with the League of Nations and establish an organization that might function essentially in perpetuity in a fashion that is going to be helpful towards peace and security in the world.

Unfortunately, it has not worked out so much that way, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the entire structure of the United Nations is something we do not talk about very often. It has a huge flaw, and the flaw is this, that in the minds of the people in this country and around the world we believe, since we have a forum there, we have a general assembly there that brings in voices from nearly every nation in the world and they sit in a place and they have an open forum and an open debate, that somehow that is a semblance of democracy and so, therefore, the will of the people of the world will be manifested in the policy of the United Nations.

The big flaw is that many of those people that sit there are either dictators themselves or mouthpieces for dictators, people that would cut the tongues out of their own constituents if they were to stand up and speak like a free people as we do here in this country. So, therefore, the voice of the world is not heard in the United Nations. It is often the voice of the rulers, the despots.

In fact, as we listened to the United Nations and the loudest voices in the United Nations prior to our engagement and liberation of Iraq, we heard a loud noise come from France, and they were organizing intensively to oppose the United States' potential operations in Iraq? That same noise came from Germany, and it came from Russia, and it came from China, where we remember those days two-and-a-half, 3 years ago.

I said at the time that the decibels of resistance to a potential liberation of

Iraq that came from those countries and others in addition to that can be indexed almost directly in proportion to their oil interests in Iraq and in the Middle East. In fact, at the time I did not know how prophetic that was, because we were not aware at the time of the Oil-for-Food Program. Now when you add that at least \$10.1 billion worth of fraud that came with Oil-for-Food, the \$5.7 billion in oil smuggling, the \$4.4 billion in illicit surcharges, we know now it is bigger than that.

We know the names of some of the players? We know that those players were in places where their voices were echoed in opposition to the liberation of the Iraqi people. One can only suspect their interest was to continue raking the gravy off of the Oil-for-Food Program and pocket the money themselves. So they had what is called a vested interest. In fact, if I remember the words of Barber Conable, it was, Hell hath no fury like a vested interest masquerading as a moral principle. Well, their moral principle was actually an immoral principle, a principle of profit. That is part of the corruption of the United Nations.

There is a sex scandal within the administration that brought actually sometimes more media than the Oil-for-Food scandal did. And then we have those things.

We need to keep encouraging the investigation into the Oil-for-Food Program, and then we have the operations of peacekeeping in Africa where we have peacekeepers perpetuating sexual violence on innocent citizens, innocent people.

An organization like this that does not have a legitimate oversight program truly needs a U.N. Reform Act? I am 100 percent supportive of this U.N. Reform Act. A number of the components in here are essential. I think it is essential that the United States looks at holding back and reserving some of its dues to the United Nations until we get a bright light that shines on the United Nations, until we have a United Nations that functions as truly the voice of the people of the world and has the accountability like we have here in the United States.

So, with that, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman for his comments. I thank him for his work.

I know that the American public agrees with you when you say that we should be withholding funding to an organization such as this where there is no accountability and there is no transparency of what has been going on all of these many years and this failing mission. So I thank you for your work.

At this time, I see we are joined by the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) for yielding and his leadership in underscoring the lengthy, loathsome and lewd history that the United Nations possesses, a history of the deception and dishonesty and duplicity.

As a former judge in Houston, Texas, for over 20 years, I believe in consequences for bad conduct. When improper behavior takes place, I do not believe that we should say to the perpetrator, the person responsible, try to do a little better. Normally, we look to the head of the organization when the organization is floundering, especially in corruption.

In order for the U.N. to regain credibility, Kofi Annan must step down. Under his watch, the world's largest financial and human rights scandal has occurred. The U.N. Oil-for-Food scandal makes the Enron scandal in Houston, Texas, look like theft of a toothbrush. This U.N. scandal resulted in millions of lives languishing in Iraq. In the ongoing investigation, it appears as though Kofi Annan and his top staff may have obstructed justice, may have destroyed piles of files that many suspect reveal how he knew what was going on all along.

There should be consequences, and my question is, what is the United Nation's position on the consequences in its own body for improper corrupt conduct? Why cannot the United Nations enforce basic civil rules for conduct?

Let us revisit just briefly some of the accusations against the United Nations in addition to the Oil-for-Food disgrace. How about the 150 allegations of sexual abuse by U.N. civilian staff and soldiers in the Congo? Accusations which include prostitution, rape, pedophilia. Or what about the numerous cases of abuse among peacekeepers in the northeastern town of Bunia? This does not include previous reports of peacekeeping abuses in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Bosnia, and Somalia, and the list goes on and on.

How about the tragic tales of defenseless North Korean defectors who faced deprivation or worse at the hands of U.N.-operated refugee camps? Or the investigations into the involvement of U.N. affiliates in trafficking prostitution in Kosovo? Not to mention, Mr. Speaker, some of the internal misconduct we have heard about like the allegations of sexual harassment, abuse of power, unwanted physical conduct within at least one U.N. administrative office. And let us not forget the indications that Kofi Annan's son, Kojo, may have engaged in corruption by way of the Swiss company for which he worked that inspected items going to Iraq on behalf of the Oil-for-Food program.

Whether or not we ever substantiate claims that the UN's Oil-for-Food initiative has ties to international terrorism, one thing is certain: Outlaws within the ranks of the United Nations have instigated terror in the lives of people across the globe. Rather than weeping for joy at the arrival of United Nation relief, many of those people run in panic at thought of such a sordid savior touching the ground in their own country.

Whatever happened to the United Nations' charter promise that advances

justice and respect for obligations arising from treaties and the dignity and the worth of the human person?

In fact, in raising the United Nations' duty to promoting dignity and humanity, how ironic it has become that countries like Sudan, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, and even China now comprise the membership in the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights.

This body must act. It must act now. And it must start with demanding that Kofi Annan step down. He is responsible for the conduct of the United Nation, because in our society we look to the head of any organization. Then let us try to aid congressional investigators in their efforts to unravel the deception and gluttony and the corruption perpetrated for years by the United Nations.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to make those comments; and I hope that we as a body can make a statement that the United Nations is going to be held accountable for its conduct.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for his comments. I thank you for bringing so many of points to the public's attention.

You raise a point of whatever happened to the U.N. charter. That is something we have been discussing tonight extensively. Whatever did happen to the charter and the role that the U.N. was set up for back in 1945?

You also used the expression, I noticed a couple of times as you went through, a litany, a litany of abuses by the U.N., whether it was the 150 human rights abuses or the forced prostitution and on and on. Each time I noticed that you mentioned the words, you said "not to mention this," as a phrase. Well, it is good thing. I appreciate the fact that you are here tonight. I appreciate the fact that you are mentioning these points, because, as you know, most of these points are not being mentioned in the mainstream media. Most of these points are not being driven home back at home, throughout our communities and the rest of the world as well.

So I applaud you for mentioning them and making sure that these are at the front of people's attention so that this body can do just as you said, hold this institution accountable. I thank the gentleman for his work.

□ 1530

The gentleman has raised so many important points that we need to go to in more detail. And as we begin to look at the reform next week, legislation, I hope that we will have the opportunity to explore each and every one of these in more detail so that the public can have a better understanding of just the number of abuses. We just touched on a little bit of detail about the Oil-for-Food scandal and abuses of the U.N. as far as that scandal and as far as the cover up that seems to be going on.

I join with the gentleman in saying that we should be asking for the head of the U.N. to step down now so that he can be replaced with someone that we all have confidence in in the interim period of time until, if ever, reform is made at the U.N. so that American taxpayers can look and say with pride, this is where our tax dollars are going, as opposed to the abuses where it is going on right now; the abuses that are, as I said before, just a litany. The gentleman mentioned the 150 alleged human rights abuses by the U.N., by the very peacekeepers who are going into these countries that are trying to make these countries safe, such as in the Congo. Instead, they bring tragedy to the very people who become victims of the U.N. as opposed to the warring factions that are over there.

The gentleman made reference also to the idea of forced prostitution. This is forced prostitution by little tiny kids. 10-year-old girls have been allegedly used and compelled into prostitution, a tragedy that is happening under the auspices of the U.N. body that we are funding. These young women, these young girls that are being compelled to be involved in this, the phrase used now just as we had the Oil-for-Food scandal, now we have the sex-for-food scandal as well.

We are talking about impoverished countries over there where food is hard to come by and people are starving in parts of Africa. And they are being, well, forced under these conditions to sell themselves for a jug of milk or a bit of food or for a dollar. For that reason now the phrase sex-for-food is here. They have also been phrased "the dollar girls" in these areas as well, again, under the watchful noses and willing acquiescence by the U.N. because it is the very people that the U.N. has engaged over there that have allowed this conduct to go on.

I believe we have significantly more issues to address, but we have only touched the tip of the iceberg as far as the need of reform or the drastic changes as far as the relationship between the United States and the U.N. I thank the Speaker for this opportunity to bring it to the American public.

CATCH THE BUS OF OPPORTUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MACK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, last month I was able to do a Special Order thanks to the minority leader and her staff who have secured time so that I can come on to the House floor and address this Congress and the leadership of this Congress and the American people.

Last month's Special Order, which is what these talks are called after legislative business has been dispensed with, was about a bus, the bus of oppor-

tunity. And it was a plea to the leaders of this Congress, to the leaders of this administration, to the leaders of this country to not allow Americans to be left behind as the bus of opportunity pulls off.

I talked about the experience that I had with a little boy who was trying to catch a metro bus to school. And he yelled to me and I ran and I ran and I ran to catch up with that bus and I told the little boy, You can run. You can catch the bus. And we caught that bus as it idled at a red light. We pounded on the door. The bus driver nodded her recognition of my request to let the little boy board the bus, and then she shook her head no and drove away. The little boy was crushed, but he caught the next bus, and I assume he successfully made it to school.

Then I talked about some statistics from leading organizations that keep them about the dire straits faced by too many Americans, and in particular too many African Americans. I showed these charts on imprisonment, the disparities that exist in our country. If you look at imprisonment, which is an indication of the status of justice in this country, it will take for the gap to close between the rates of imprisonment for African Americans and the rates of imprisonment for white Americans to close, it will take 190 years.

For poverty, for the rate of poverty experienced by African Americans, to catch up to the rate of poverty experienced by white Americans it will take 150 years to close that gap if nothing is done in the area of public policy. Child poverty, 210 years to erase the gap of a large number of African American children who experience poverty. Income, 581 years to close the income gap experienced by African Americans in this country. And, finally, because the President talks about homeownership and the power of homeownership and how this budget that this Congress is now in the process of passing, is to promote homeownership in this country, sadly the rate of homeownership in the African American community pales in comparison to that experienced in the white community. It will take 1,664 years to close the homeownership gap if nothing is done.

So I ask the leadership of this Congress to please pay attention to these statistics because these statistics represent real people. And despite what the Republicans say about us having a growth economy, the sad fact is that if we do nothing, too many Americans are being left behind, too many Americans. And so I ask that we leave no American behind.

Mr. Speaker, in Iraq I ask the question tonight, are we leaving our soul behind? Who are we as a country? What have we become? Do the American people even care? What can we do to regain our soul?

Mr. Speaker, I have noted on this floor that the snows of Kilimanjaro are melting, that the glaciers in the Arctic are melting, that we have real serious